4-1944

New Cotton Picker May Reform Farms

Amsterdam News
New York, N.Y. 1-8-44

CHICAGO, (ANP) — Development of a new two-row cotton picker has been announced by officials of the International Harvester company, who predict that the new machine may revolutionize the great cotton industry of the south.

No accurate statistics have been compiled becau. of the limited number produced by wartime restrictions, but it was learned that one California farmer who used the machine estimated he saved about $20 per bale over hand picking costs, and this figure included a $4 per bale loss resulting from downgrading of the picked cotton.

Negro Laborers Victims of Labor Hoax; On Relief

The Sun — Avon Park, Fla.

Several hundred Florida negro citrus workers, victims of a widespread hoax, are stranded, destitute and living on relief, in Camden, N. J. according to an article in the Orlando Morning Sentinel.

While working at good jobs in Florida they were duped by men posing as CIO union organizers, who persuaded them to pay from $5 to $12 for union membership, quit their jobs and board a train for Camden under instruction to report for work at the Campbell Soup Co.'s plant, WMC officials charged. They found no jobs waiting for them because they didn't have the proper release from the United States Employment Service. 6-16-44

Details of the action, termed as illegal recruitment of Florida labor, were made public yesterday by Charles W. Barnett, director of the Orlando area of the War Manpower Commission, whose immediate concern is to broadcast a warning and prevent the victimizing of other Florida workers.

"Any workers migrating to the North without proper release runs the chance of not getting a job when he gets there," Barnett said. "If he quits his job here, he cannot get a job in the North. There are enough jobs in Florida right now for those people who are stranded in Camden. Florida employers are suffering for the need of the men who are on relief in New Jersey.

"Florida workers should know that no canning plants, packing houses or war plants have any authority to recruit labor in Florida. Only the United States Employment Service has the authority to recruit labor, and no recruitment is being done at the present time, except for some skilled labor for a secret war construction job in the Northwest. The Campbell Soup Co., although it needs workers, is not attempting to recruit them in Florida."

Frank L. McNamee, WMC Regional Director at Philadelphia, wrote the following letter to Dillard B. Lassiter, WMC regional chief at Atlanta: 6-16-44

"A thorough questioning of applicants who have reported to the Camden office for employment with the Campbell Soup Co., indicates they have been contacted by representatives of the Florida Citrus and Allied Workers Union in Florida. These workers were then charged union fees of varying costs which ranged from $5 to $12 and were told to report to the Campbell Soup Co., for employment.

"This practice has caused considerable difficulty for the Camden office and the company itself; because statements of working conditions, wages, housing, etc., given by the representatives of the union are often exaggerated. A check with local CIO officials in New Jersey indicates they are not sponsoring this recruitment."

Inquiries at the Orlando office of the CIO revealed that CIO officials have been trying for several weeks to run down the perpetrators of the fraud. Ann Mathews, CIO canners and packers union representative here, said that unauthorized persons must have gotten hold of old receipt books of the Florida Citrus and Allied Workers Union and are fraudulently soliciting CIO memberships."

"The CIO name in Florida has been changed to Florida Citrus Organizing Committee for several months," Miss Mathews stated. "We have not used the name of Florida Allied Citrus and Allied Workers Union since January, nor have we solicited any new memberships. We have not recruited any workers for the Campbell Soup Co., had have so advised the War Manpower Commission here."

When the Florida workers show up at the Campbell Soup Co., for their jobs, they are sent to the United States Employment Service there for clearance. In the absence of proper papers, the Orlando office is asked for release. The Orlando office refuses such release, and the worker finds himself stranded with no opportunity for employment. 6-16-44

Five or six such requests have been denied each day since February, according to Director Barnett. The continued deluge of such requests to Orlando caused the investigation. How many other victims are on their way to New Jersey is not known. Barnett said the requests are still coming to him from Camden each day.

Visit Here Of Jamaicans Told By 'AG' Dep't.

Daily World
Atlanta, Ga.

Customary For State Dep't To Release Account

7-14-44

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(NNPA)—The visit of two young ladies from Jamaica, sent by their government to study wartime developments in the U. S. Department of Agriculture's 4-H club program, was announced this week by the Department of Agriculture.

In every other case of visitors to the United States from other countries the announcements have been made by the State Department, and the visitors have been described as guests of the State Department. This has been true of visitors from Mexico, Brazil, China, Uraguay, Panama, etc. Some have come to study hospital methods, others to studp social conditions, library facilities, etc.

The Jamaican visitors are Misses Ivy E. Lewis and Inez V. Gray, 4-H specialists. They hope to help Jamaican farm youths make a larger contribution to the Allied war effort. They will spend part of their time in the Departbment of Agriculture conferring with 4-H officials and part in the field with Extension Service county agents, visiting farm facilities where they see club members in action. They have visited already areas in Virginia, and in New York State. 7-14-44

4-H clubs were established in Jamaica four years ago as result of the visit of a Jamaican agriculturist to the U. S. On his return he found no difficulty in getting the Jamaican youth to pledge their "Heads" to clearer thinking, their "Hearts" to greater loyalty, their "Hands' to larger service and their "Health" to better living. There are now 192 clubs on the island with a total membership in excess of 4000.

Miss Lewis and Miss Gray expect to return to Jamaica the latter part of the summer.

History Prizes Given Educators By Ass'n. Of Negro History

Age — New York, N.Y.
11-11-44

To stimulate further interest in the scientific presentation of facts of Negro History, a friend of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History has made available an annual award of two hundred and twenty-five dollars in prizes.

The first prize of one hundred dollars for the best article contributed to the Journal of Negro History during the year ending September 30, 1944, goes to W. M. Brewer, head of the Department of History of Washington High Schools, for his "Poll Tax and the Poll Taxers." 11/11/44

The second prize of fifty dollars for the next best article contributed to this magazine during the year goes to Professor J. Reuben Sheeler of Alabama State Teachers College for his "The Development of Unionism in East Tennessee." 11-11-44

The first prize of fifty dollars for the best book review contributed to the Journal of Negro History during the year, goes to Professor Kenneth W. Porter, of Vassar College, for his analysis of James Truslow Adams' "The American."

The second prize of twenty-five dollars for the next best book review contributed to this magazine during the year goes to Dr. Benjamin Quarles, of Dillard University, for his evaluation of Madeline Hooke Rice's "American Catholic Opinion in the Slavery Controversy."

THE DEEP SOUTH

N.Y. Times — N.Y.C.

Peonage of Paroled Convicts Meets Louisiana Curb

12-24-44

By JAMES E. CROWN

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 23—The peonage system as applied to paroled convicts in Louisiana is on the way out. The recalling of three prisoners from a big dairy farm in up-State Louisiana, where they were found to be working ten to fourteen hours a day for 75 cents and to be otherwise mistreated, has crystallized sentiment to such an extent that the entire parole system may be revised.

It is declared that 189 parolees are working on plantations for an average pay of about 25 cents an hour, regardless of prevailing wages. These men, nearly all Negroes, are docked on the slightest pretext and the 25 cents an hour usually amounts to about 15 cents an hour.

Under Louisiana's present parole system a prisoner cannot leave a job unless he can show the parole board that he is badly treated or can get a better job. The State is now busily engaged in investigating each case where prisoners have been assigned to work for favored employers.

News Notes: The old French quarter of New Orleans, known as the Vieux Carre, is in for a general overhauling. Many of the historic houses must be made to conform to modern safety regulations. The population of New Orleans has demanded almost en masse that fire traps be eliminated. This follows the death of five persons in one blaze and of four others in other fires. . . . The mothers of Louisiana settled the proposed "kissing strike" at the State University. Because a young woman was suspended when she defended kissing "dates" good night on the campus, and saw no harm in promiscuous kissing to a certain extent, a big part of the student body threatened to walk out unless she was reinstated. Then the parents from all over this State and other States wheeled into action and a great majority of them declared that rebellious students should be spanked. This strengthened the stand of the university authorities and now promiscuous kissing is out for good on the university campus and there will be no strike.

Drive On to Free Sharecroppers

afro American Baltimore, Md.
12-9-44

NEW YORK. (ANP) — A $50,000 drive was launched here recently by the National Sharecroppers' Fund, established in 1943 to help agricultural workers, tenant farmers and sharecroppers, to liberate Southern sharecroppers, under a program known as a "Magna Charta for Southern Agriculture."

Freedom for 9,000,000

"Our aim, the abolition of the sharecropping system and the destruction of this monstrous system of exploitation," said Edward C. Lindeman, chairman, "means the emancipation of 9,000,000 American and of the generations to follow them."

The agency has proposed that every honorably discharged veteran of the armed services shall have the right, according to his ability and experience as a farmer, to government aid in securing ownership of a fairly-valued, family-sized farm.

According to a report by the National Sharecroppers' Fund, 4,250,000 sharecropper families and their children received 3 per cent of the national income, while Northeastern non-farm people, with approximately 8,500,000 children, received 42 per cent.

New Victory Ships Not to Get Individual Names

Afro-American Baltimore, Md.
5-27-44

WASHINGTON

Unlike the Liberty ships, the new Victory ships will not bear the names of individuals, but will be named for small cities and towns, the U.S. Maritime Commission revealed this week.

West coast shipyards have been building Victory ships for some time, but Eastern yards have recently begun their construction. The first Victory ships to be launched in Baltimore will go down the ways sometime in July or August. 5-27-44

While there are still a number of Liberty ships yet to be launched, names have already been selected for all of them.

Soybean and Tractor Are Hopeful Auguries for the Small Farmer

Daily Worker — New York, N. Y.
8-16-44

By EUGENE GORDON

(Second of a series)

Cotton and corn — particularly cotton — are still cultivated abundantly in the deep South. Even there, however, as in Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina and Virginia, you see countless miles of vine-covered earth, an impenetrable green carpet growing over the fields.

"What's that?" I asked a seat mate. We were on a train going south through Tennessee.

"Soybeans."

The soybean is among the South's most flourishing newer crops.

One sees in southern Tennessee, Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana oceans of growing rice undulating into the horizon. One sees, adjacent to these fields, stacks of yellow straw from which grain has been threshed. One sees rice-processing plants.

NEW INDUSTRIES 8-15-44

Here is a development of which southerners speak with hopeful enthusiasm: the building of industries adjacent to products on southern land. Alabama's Governor Sparks predicts the South's economic salvation as a result; and John Temple Graves, Birmingham Age-Herald columnist, when asked how postwar Negro labor would fit into that scheme, said very well, provided no large number of white workers remained unemployed. (I suggested that it was the postwar South's responsibility, aided by the rest of the country, to see that no large numbers of workers remained unemployed.)

The chief reason for more extensive cultivation of the soybean is its increasing economic value as food for farm stock and for man.

The traveler through Louisiana and Texas sees sugar cane and sweet potatoes, in addition to rice and soybeans. In Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia, tobacco, as during slavery, is still a popular crop. 8-15-44

KNOWS THE FARMS

Francis Bowers, 70-year-old captain of waiters in a Hot Springs hotel, sat beside me en route from Memphis to Little Rock. He has spent most of his life on farms.

"Thousands and thousands of acres uncultivated," he said. "Farmers can't get help. Men in the army and women can't do the work."

Didn't just such a situation encourage mechanization of farming?

"A little," he acknowledged. "As far as plainting is concerned."

But that meant changing from cotton to soybeans or corn.

"A tractor-drawn plow can cultivate cotton after it grows a certain height, but not sooner."

I asked the cost of such a plow.

"Oh, I'd say around $1,800—counting the traction and the plow. But it'll last up to 25 years, with the right care. Tires right now are pretty expensive and hard to get."

REPLACES 100 MEN

Each average-sized plow has 12 blades or discs and displaces 100 men. The old-style mule-drawn plow, still used throughout the South, makes one furrow to a mechanical plow's 12.

"A tractor can run to the end of a row and back while a mule goes once," Bowers said. "So it's twice as fast and 12 times as good."

I asked him: 8-15-44

"Is mechanical plowing taking place only where labor has left the farms, or are some farms, having become mechanized, driving men away?"

He wasn't sure.

Many Southerners believe the manpower shortage is not causing more mechanization. What it is doing, they think, is causing abandonment of thousands and thousands of acres. J. R. Otis, Tuskegee Institute authority on Black Belt farming, supports this view.

Oscar Bryant, of Birmingham, Southern organizer for the National Negro Conference, informed me that mechanized farming is developing "on a basis of dwindling sharecropping."

"What's the reason for this dwindling sharecropping'?"

Here is Bryant's answer:

"The Farm Security Administration was administered at the beginning by sons and daughters of the landlords, who tried to run it like the plantation system and were of no help to the sharecroppers. Where the government was subsidizing farms, the sharecropper got none of it. 8-15-44

"We organized the masses of sharecroppers in the fight for their portion of the subsidies and demanded that each get a check separate from the landlord's. The croppers, in gaining this, were told by the landlords:

"'No more sharecropping. You work for wages or get off the land.'

"So a big wave of moving into the cities took place. The white urban population increased 20 percent from 1940 to 1943. The Negro urban population increased 33 percent. That left a large percentage idle."

EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

Migration has forced wealthy farmers to raise wages and to eliminate "slave-driving." Farm workers, including women, receive $1.50 a day and more for eight hours' labor. The woman thus has time for home duties before going to and after returning from the field. 8-15-44

"She used to work out there from sun-up to sun-down—17 hours a day," Bryant said. "The farm owner now comes by in his car, picks up the workers and takes them to the fields. This is true, in some ways," he added, "throughout the South, but especially in central Alabama."

He felt that, with young people growing up and leaving, the farmer must think about mechanization.

"The small farmer can't afford a tractor costing from $1,000 up, so we'll have to appeal to the government now"—and he emphasized now—"to make a survey of small farms. That would show the various kinds of farm machinery needed and how much—mechanical plows, harrows, mowers and binders, to say nothing of tractors, which provide the motive power."

The government would assist the small farmer to procure these things. 8-15-44

Cotton is being displaced, chiefly in Alabama, by peanuts, Bryant said, remarking that the influence of Dr. George Washington Carver, late Negro agricultural scientist, is growing. Boll-weevil damage to cotton has increased the commercial importance of peanuts.

Negroes in Mississippi, also Bryant's territory, are almost totally on farms. Most of those in cities work at one or another time on the farm, the city employer being as a rule owner also of the farm.

I learned in Biloxi that Mississippi delta plantations, as during slavery, extend for miles on end in four directions. Tenant farming and sharecropping prevail, tenant farmers renting the land for so much in money or products, and the sharecropper, being supplied with seed and tools, raising the crop and sharing it with the landlord.

MECHANIZED PLANTATIONS

Giles Hubert, Fisk University (Nashville) farm expert, confirmed reports that some plantations are being mechanized. Some sharecroppers' plots, he said, had been thrown into a system of "through-and-through" cultivation.

"What happens to a sharecropper's psychology when he becomes a tractor driver?"

Hubert said the cropper "retains his psychology," but added, "It is changing. 8-15-44

Oscar Bryant said:

"More land can, and should, be owned by small farmers, but we'll have to put up a harder fight against the Farm Bureau, the reactionary Republicans and the poll-tax Southerners, all of whom are working directly in the interest of the big landlords."

Labor must learn to see its interests as linked with the small farmers', Bryant declared.

How about labor-farmer unity in support of Roosevelt's Five-Point program? **That** combination should help solve many problems, now and after the war.

Daily Worker — New York, N. Y.
8-16-44

This sharecropper shack, in southeast Missouri, is still typical of the homes of those who toil in southern fields. In the area where this shack stands, the Farm Security Administration plans to build cottages under its "scattered labor homes" program.

Southerners Deny Farm Labor Lack

People's Voice
8-12-44
N. Y. N. Y.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (ANP)—A dramatic lesson in racial harmony was given local whites during the four-day 11th annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers union here and they are still dazed by the miracle of learning that 150 white and Negro delegates from 11 states called each other "brother" and "sister" and even referred to one Negro delegate as "mister." 8-12-44

The leaders were H. L. Mitchell, a Memphis white man and president of the union, F. R. Botten, a Negro, vice-president and Rose Pesetta, who has been active in Northern labor circles.

Resolutions adopted by the body supported a permanent FEPC, requested land for homesteading, demanded abolition of war prisoner labor, vetoed the importation of foreign labor to the south and urged an investigation of civil rights violation against seasonal itinerant farm workers by the extension service and the farm bureau.

A minimum of 50,000 workers will be available on plantations of

4-1944

Alabama

4 Camps In Baldwin County Ready For Negro School Boys

Advertiser - Montgomery, Ala.
4-19-44

TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE, ALA April 18—Dr. J. R. Otis, State leader for Negro agricultural extension work, said upon returning from Baldwin County today that adequate facilities for 250 Negro boys to help harvest the Baldwin County potato crop had been provided at Bay Minette, Daphne, and Fairhope. Ninety boys will have equally as good accommodations at Mitlin school and the Eastman farm.

"Buildings are being screened and shower baths installed at all the camps for colored boys the same as for white boys," said Dr. Otis. "At each camp wholesome meals will be served cafeteria style. First Aid medical attention will be provided the boys through the service of a registered public health nurse."

Camps will be managed by Prof. C. A. Lett, Bay Minette; W J. Carroll, Daphne; Roosevelt Henderson, Fairhope; John H. Brooks, Snow Hill Institute, and Scout Manager Wilson of the Montgomery USO Center. These managers, together with numerous adult supervisors, will safeguard the health and welfare of the Negro boys. Negro cooks are being employed from the areas where the boys are being recruited. 4-19-44

The work day is eight hours; however, since the boys are on piece work, past experience has been that they wish to work longer hours so as to increase their earnings. If this is the case this year, the work day will be limited to 10 hours.

Boys doing good work and remaining throughout the harvesting season will be given a certificate honoring their service in this emergency.

Dr. Otis said that parents having sons wishing to serve in this emergency may obtain additional information from the Negro county agents in Montgomery, Jefferson, Wilcox, Dallas, Hale, Macon, Morgan, and possibly other counties. Only boys who are approved by the principal and teachers in the school in which they are enrolled will be taken. This removes any doubt that the boys who go will fail to pass their school work and make their class at the beginning of the next school year.

New Underground Gets Farm Workers To Job

Daily World - Atlanta, Ga
5-24-44

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(NNPA)—The following story appeared in the April issue of the National Union Farmer:

A new Underground Railroad is bringing human beings out of the South. The original Underground brought slaves north to freedom. This one aids white and colored farm workers, who have been improperly frozen or hoarded in their home outside counties under Public Law 45, even though there may be no work for them there and plenty of work elsewhere, to slip away from county agents charged with enforcing the labor-hoarding law. They are going where they ca produce war-crops and find work.

Farm laborers will not be aided nor encouraged to leave the South when they are actually needed for war food production there.

The "Railroad" is not operated in violation of any law, but thru a loop hole. The National Union Farmer, of course, will not disclose that loop hole to the Southern Planters and Extensionists who now attempt to freeze surplus labor in the South to keep down wages for cotton chopping and picking.

However, any Farmers Union groups who would like to arrange now for groups of Southern Farm Workers in July, August and September may write their state presidents and National Union Farmer will advise the state president how to contact the new "Underground Railroad." 5-24-44

It is desirable that employment be offered groups of 25 or more. Advances of $15 to $30, depending on distance, will be necessary to get th eworkers to their jobs, and there must be an assurance of decent pay, from which the advance may be deducted.

Report shocking living conditions for Jamaicans

Citizen - Los Angeles
6-16-44 Calif.

DES MOINES—John S. Coleman, president of the Des Moines branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, has investigated living conditions of 30 farm workers imported from Jamaica, and charges that they are "shocking". Coleman, protesting the conditions to the mayor of Marshalltown for whose cannery the men are harvesting tomatoes, said the Jamaicans sleep in a crowded one-room, concrete-floored shed with no fire.

BAHAMA NEGROES TO AID GEORGIA PE[ACH] HARVEST

[Atlanta, Ga. Jour]
6-24-44

[La]bor contingent of [na]tives of the [Is]lands will be brough[t] Georgia June 5 to aid far[m] the harvesting of peaches, [it] learned Friday from Hudso[n] Wren, chief of operations of the War Food Administration's Office of Labor here.

This will mark the first time that foreign labor has been brought into Georgia to aid in harvesting crops except for the use of war prisoners.

The Negroes will be brought into Georgia, Mr. Wren said, from Florida, where a group of 5,500 who have been working there are just finishing their jobs.

The group will remain in Georgia throughout the peach season and will be paid on a piecework basis at the prevailing wage rate.

Mr. Wren also disclosed that a contingent of between 12,000 and 16,000 Jamaican Negroes will be brought into the United States for harvesting work, chiefly in Northern states, and that the first boatload already has arrived at Miami. One group of these natives will be used in harvesting the sugar crops in Florida.

This is the first group of Jamaican laborers to reach the United States this year.

[Use] of West Indian labo[r] Georgia would appear to in[dicate] extremely tight labor sit[uation] on farms in the peach-pro[ducing] areas inasmuch as approval [for] the use of foreign labor is [not] granted if domestic labor is ava[il]able elsewhere.

The first step in the procedure of applying for foreign laborers is for the farmers to apply to their county extension agent. If the extension agent finds that no domestic labor is available in the county in which application is made, he forwards the request to the State Extension Service director. If the state director determines that no domestic labor is available within the state, he, in turn, forwards the application to Washington.

There the application is approved only if it is found that no domestic labor is available anywhere else at the time needed.

The Bahamians will be used for aiding in the harvesting of peaches in the Manchester area in Meriwether County. 4-28-44

WFA's Office of Labor obtains its authority for bringing in foreign labor for the harvesting of essential crops under Public Law 229. The Atlanta office has jurisdiction over the Southeastern region.

Jamaican, Bahamian Workers at Md. Camps List Gripes

Afro-American — Baltimore, Md.

Low Wages, Bad Food, No Recreational or Religious Facilities, No Hot Water and Sometimes No Work; Laborers Want Out

7-22-44 By LOWELL LOMAX

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Complaints of insufficient work and low wages were made to the AFRO on Monday by Jamaican and Bahamian laborers at the Vienna and Westover War Food Administration labor camps on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

Jamaicans at the Vienna camp charge that the U.S. Government promised them a $3 daily minimum wage before they came to this country, but failed to pay it when, because of rain or lack of work, they were unable to earn that amount of money.

Other charges are that the food is of inferior quality and not worth a dollar a day for two meals and lunch.

At the Bahamian camp in Westover, the mess hall has been closed entirely and the workers cook their food on brick ovens in an open field or eat at a private lunch room.

Louis Hueper, white, manager, said that the mess hall was closed because it did not pay for itself. The workers, however, explained that they had been charged for meals whether they ate or not.

Jackie Portier and Dix Davis said they owe bills of $20 and $18.50, respectively, at the post exchange for meals for which they were charged when the mess hall was open. 7-22-44

These Bahamians stated that they are paid 8 cents for each hamper of tomatoes picked and 40 cents for each hamper of string beans. Pay by the hour is 40 cents. Farmers, the employers, determine the method of pay.

Farmers Set Pay Method

At the Vienna camp Jamaicans said that the farmers pay an hourly rate for picking cucumbers, because they pick them faster than tomatoes and string beans, and that payment by the hour saves the farmers money in harvesting the cucumber crop.

Other complaints are that farmers "dock" the laborers a half an hour when they go to the toilet and that they cheat on their time by having them report to the fields at 7:30 a.m. but refuse to "start their time" until 8 a.m.

Under the present plan, the farmers call for a designated number of workers in the morning and carry them to the farms in trucks. According to Jamaican laborers, there is no system of rotating the workers. Those who get in the trucks first get the work. 7-22-44

The farmers pay the post manager the wages of the entire crew at the end of the day and he pays the workers on the weekly pay day.

Irvin Walters, a Jamaican, showed the AFRO reporter his weekly pay envelope. It read:

Weekly Earnings	$18.00
Deductions	5.00
Board	8.50
Total	$13.50
Amount Paid Worker	$4.50

Other workers at this camp said that they could not make enough money to pay their bills and to send back home to their families. Many expressed a desire to be transferred or to be returned to Jamaica.

James Morrison, a laborer at the Jamaican camp, revealed that the police came into the field last Tuesday and held him at the Vienna station for an hour and a half without preferring charges. He was later released.

John I. Havilah, white, camp manager, described Morrison as an "agitator." He made no specific charges, but said that Morrison had been transferred here from Camp Bloomingdale.

Two other workers had been deported for being "trouble-makers," it was learned. 7-22-44

No Recreation

Gertrude Hyler, a Bahamian woman at the Westover Camp, told of falling from a truck while working in Florida and being hospitalized for four weeks in Miami. She suffered permanent injuries, but declared that the Government had given her no compensation for these injuries or the time lost.

Workers also decried the lack of movies and organized social affairs. There is no hot water for washing and bathing, Bahamian women said, adding that they carry water from a camp spigot.

American women at the Pocomoke Labor Supply Center also are dissatisfied because there is no hot water nor facilities for holding religious services.

Sam Harris, white, Pocomoke Camp manager, said that the older workers refuse to hold religious services in the post recreation hall because the young folks dance there. 7-22-44

Rent at the camps is 50 cents per person a week. Workers buy their own clothes. They said that white merchants in the community charged more than ceiling prices.

Use Oil Lamps

None of the cabins, or tents, in which the men live, have electric light. Kerosene oil lamps and coal stoves are used.

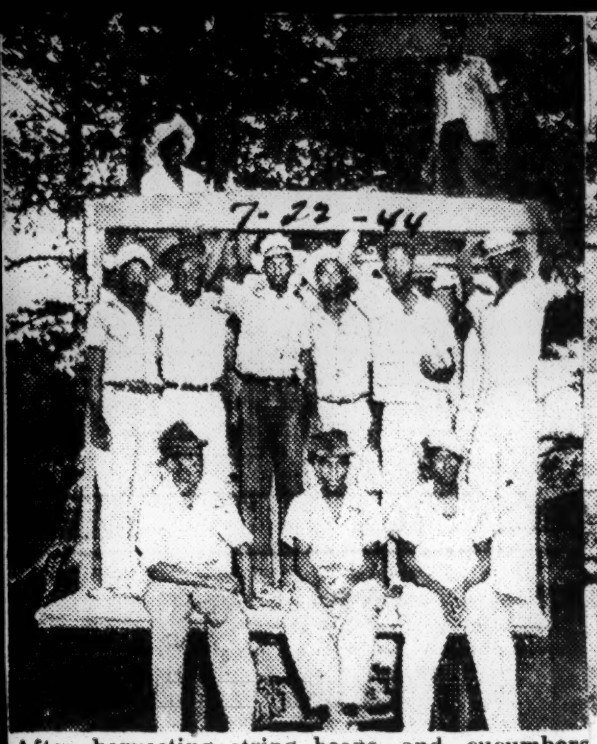
Populated by migrant workers from Florida, the Pocomoke Labor Supply Center, Pocomoke, Md., is generally better. It has a well-equipped first-aid infirmary with a graduate nurse, Miss Mary E. Miller, in charge.

The worker's organization is under the leadership of L. R. Robert Prescott. Workers said they often earned as much as $5 to $10 a day. 7-22-44

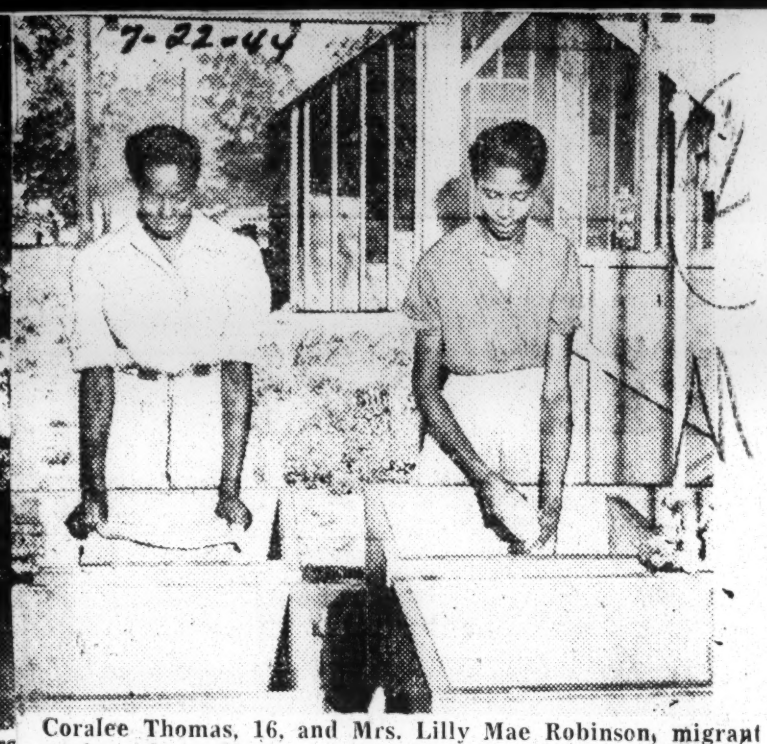
EDITOR'S NOTE: All three camps are located in different counties, and wages are paid in accordance with the prevailing rate in the respective county.

The average population of each camp is from 100 to 200 workers, including single men and women, and families. There are nine camps on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, with a total of 2,400 laborers, all under the supervision of William Ensor, white, area representative of the War Food Administration at Salisbury, Md.

Sherman Briscoe, information specialist at the Department of Agriculture, conducted the tour of the camps. Other Washingtonians making the trip were Mrs. Helen Mason, Alfred Smith and William Scott. AFRO photog.



After harvesting string beans and cucumbers Jamaican laborers return to Vienna (Md.) camp which has 182 men, no women. One worker earned $18, but was paid $4.50.



Coralee Thomas, 16, and Mrs. Lilly Mae Robinson, migrant workers from Florida, wash clothes at the Pocomoke City (Md.) Camp. Coralee is saving money to continue her education at Belle Glade, Fla., high school.

Robert Prescott, president of the Pocomoke Camp Council, watches as Nurse Mary E. Miller treats Armella Jones, 6, in the well-equipped first aid room at Pocomoke Camp. A registered nurse, Miss Miller, is a graduate of Provident Hospital, Baltimore.

AFRO's Photographer William Scott stood in a tree to get this view of the Bahamian camp in Westover, Md., where farm workers complain of poor food and housing, and lack of recreational facilities.

Duke of Windsor Visits Bahamian Farm Workers Here

Bahamian farm workers at two places in Delaware — the farm labor supply center at Cool Spring and Chandler's Orchards, near Cool Spring — had a caller from home Tuesday, August 8, and gave him an enthusiastic welcome. He was the Duke of Windsor, Governor of the Bahamas.

For the Duke it was a case of combining pleasure with business. It was an official inspection trip to see how these subjects of the British Empire were getting along. And he had a good time making it. He expressed pleasure over seeing the workers, having lunch at the Cool Spring center, and hearing of their experiences in helping American farmers produce one of the Allies' most essential weapons of war — food.

After the inspection, the Duke commented that he had found the workers "very well taken care of and in very good condition."

The workers were equally pleased over the Duke's visit. At the Cool Spring center, the 175 living there gathered around to chat with him, pointed with pride to their kitchen, mess hall, health clinic, living quarters, and other facilities, and staged a little impromptu entertainment for his benefit. And at Chandler's Orchards, as the Duke stepped from the automobile, the 19 workers there, lined up alongside the road, sang in unison, "God Save the King."

Photographers wanted the Duke to climb a ladder and pick peaches. He agred to do it. But he found the peaches on that particular tree beyond his reach. A Bahamian, quickly noting the Duke's predicament, moved behind the tree and handed peaches up to the Duke from his basket. Amused by this, the Duke joked, "This is the lazy man's way of doing it!" as he placed them into his basket.

Accompanying the Duke on his tour were Lieut. Col. Henry Walsh, assistant director of labor, War Food Administration, Washington, D. C.; John A. Mughes, labor officer of the Bahafa Government; and several officials of War Food Administration's office of Labor. The Duke came from New York City to Wilmington, Delaware, by train and returned to New York City by train that night from Baltimore, Md., after a 200-mile auto trip into Delaware and Maryland.

More than 5,700 workers from the Bahama Islands, representing about 20 percent of the adult population of that British West Indies colony, are in the United States this summer, under contract with WFA's Office of Labor.

4-1944 Foreign Labor

Jamaicans Refuse To Pick Cotton; Quit Farm Jobs

Defender — Chicago, Ill
10-21-44

PHOENIX, Ariz.— Unwillingness to pick cotton on farms in the Valley of the Sun and lack of proper housing facilities were the reasons advanced here for the sudden and unexpected exodus of 500 Jamaicans Saturday from this city.

Sent here from Wisconsin, controversy had developed upon their arrival as they had been assured that they would be assigned to vegetable farms. They had finally agreed to try their hand at cotton picking, though they were unfamiliar with it.

Brought to Arizona by the Agricultural War Commodity, Inc., headed by William Springer, for the prime purpose of relieving the labor shortage, the Jamaicans immediately expressed a dislike for cotton picking, jobs which have been assigned to German prisoners of war stationed in nearby camps. Last year several thousand Mexicans were imported from their native country to pick cotton.

10-21-44

Many observers point out that the attitude of many farm hands, who migrated here from sections of the country where jim-crowism is practiced, toward the Jamaicans is also responsible for their departing. In the group were many well-learned men and women who seem to be puzzled by the prejudice that exists here.

4-1944 Georgia

Atlanta School Children Help Harvest Cotton

Daily World — Atlanta, Ga.
9-19-44

School children of Atlanta and Fulton county are helping in the harvest of the cotton crop in this area, according to Prof. B. L. Colbert of Washington High School.

Through a call of Superintendent Jere A. Wells through S. D. Truitt, County agent, children in supervised groups are going to the aid of the farmers. Students are paid the prevailing price in the local community where the cotton picking is done. The county schools are asked to furnish from ten to 20 bus loads per day. Through the Supply and Service Division, the Army is furnishing the transportation. The carriers pick up the children and the supervisor at the school at seven o'clock in the morning. The time they return in the afternoon may be decided in concurrence between the supervisor and drivers.

9-19-44

The students and supervisor furnish their own lunch and drinking cups The farmer furnish the cotton sacks Students, who pick cotton under the teacher's supervision, will not be counted absent from school. The entire matter is on a voluntary basis.

Each student is furnished a blank for the parents to sign and this is returned to the supervisor' files.

White Plantation Owner Gets 2 Yrs.

Afro American
Baltimore, Md.

HELENA, Ark. Pleading guilty to two counts of peonage after the court refused a motion to dismiss nine counts against him, Albert S. Johnson, wealthy white plantation owner, was sentenced to two and a half years in Federal prison, Saturday.

Johnson changed his plea abrupty after he had sat silently in court Saturday and listened as his eleven colored and white employees told of his beating them and threatening their lives if they left the plantation.

Alec McKinney, 20, former laborer on the farm and star witness at the trial, testified that none of the workers on the Eastern Arkansas cotton plantation received regular wages for their work. 3-25-44

McKinney also testified, and corroborated by other witnesses, that the rich plantation owner required his workers to surrender their ration books to him when they began work for him.

Witness Changes Story

A dramatic incident in the trial came Thursday when Assistant U.S. Attorney W. H. Gregory recalled William E. Riddick to the stand, in a surprise move, to review testimony he had given on the previous day. 3-25-44

Riddick, who had testified the day before that Johnson "was the best boss I ever had," told the court he had been coached by Johnson shortly before he took the stand on Wednesday, but that he was changing his story because "my conscience is hurting me."

All of the workers charged Johnson with taking their ration coupons from them, juggling their accounts at his planation commissary, threatening their lives and reducing them to virtual slavery.

Dixie Courts Rapped By U.S. Judge's Rule

Amsterdam News
New York, N.Y.

Extradition of Man In Peonage Case Is Stopped By Courts

12-23-44

CHICAGO, (ANP)—"Some of these plantation owners apparently don't know that slavery has been ended in the United States," said Federal Judge Walter J. LaBuy Thursday in a ringing denunciation of Mississippi Negro peonage in the case of Lannie Kimbrough. Judge LaBuy overruled Gov. Dwight H. Green's extradition of Kimbrough to Mississippi on a frame-up assault charge.

The story of Kimbrough's servitude on a Mississippi plantation and how he, his wife and two children escaped to Chicago was brought out for the court's analysis by Atty. William Henry Huff, noted peonage lawyer.

Planter Found Guilty Of Peonage; Gets 2½ Years

Defender — Chicago, Ill.
3-25-44

HELENA, Ark.—Peonage in Arkansas received a set-back this week when Albert S. Johnson, plantation owner who forced poor whites and Negroes to work for him by using "gestapo" tactics, was sentenced to two and a half years in the penitentiary by U. S. District Judge Harry C. Lemley.

Witnesses testified that the owner of the 2,000-acre plantation often threatened his workers with a rifle and pistols and occasionally whipped them when they made attempts to get away. Johnson managed the plantation store, took his employe's ration books, made them buy from his store alone and then refused to take cash in payment, thus obligating them to him for cash debts.

Lurid tales of the means Johnson employed to keep his workers in virtual slavery were unfolded as witness after witness took the stand to testify. One young woman, Miss Marguerite Walker, declared Johnson came to her home and forced her to accompany him to his plantation. 3-25-44

When she ran away the planter traced her down and compelled her at the point of a gun to get out of bed in the middle of the night, dress herself and accompany him back to his farm. Still another worker became so frightened he fled the plantation in the middle of the night without taking his possessions.

In passing sentence, Judge Lemley declared: "The court is of the opinion that the Government has made a strong case and that the defendent not only committed the crime of peonage but has done so in an aggravated way. 3-25-44

"His treatment of some of the ignorant Negroes involved in the case has been so brutal as to require the court to give him a substantial sentence in a Federal Penitentiary notwithstanding the fact that he is entitled to some allowance which the court will make on account of his having at this time entered his plea of guilty, thereby saving the Government considerable additional expense."

Victimized

Kimbrough said he had been working for the U. S. Engineering Service in Mississippi as a bulldozer operater on airfields at a salary of $270 a month until he was victimized in a frame-up quarrel with one Willie Stewart and Stewart's two sons, all colored, on Dec. 1, 1942, who slashed him with knives. All were arrested and jailed for the altercation, Kimbrough testified.

While in jail he was visited by one W. P. Scruggs, white plantation owner, who promised to arrange his freedom if Kimbrough would agree to work on his plantation. Kimbrough accepted the offer, he told the court, but only received $42 in wages for a year's work. 12-23-44

No Freedom

To Judge La Buy's question as to why he stayed at the plantation, Kimbrough answered that he knew of three Negroes who asked Scruggs for permission to leave his employment, and all three were beaten with ax handles or wrench handles and severely injured, adding, "So I decided not to ask to leave."

Kimbrough, his wife and children fled to Chicago on Aug. 28 of this year and he obtained a job in a war plant here. Although he had been told by Scruggs that his case had been disposed of, and that he and Stewart had since shaken hands, the request for extradition based on an indictment charging Kimbrough with assault with a deadly weapon on one Willie Stewart on March 1, 1943, or three months after the altercation, followed his escape and was granted by Gov. Dwight H. Green.

Kimbrough won his freedom when Atty. Huff petitioned the court for a writ of habeas corpus on the grounds that Kimbrough was being deprived of his constitutional rights.

ATTY. W. H. HUFF OF CHICAGO THWARTS ARKANSAS PEONAGE

Globe-Nashville, Tenn
11-12-44

CHICAGO, Ill.—Attorney William Henry Huff, successful battler against the crime of peonage, so widely practiced in certain Southern states, gained the freedom of a young Negro from Arkansas before U. S. Commissioner Edwin K. Walker here last week. Efforts were being made to carry Roosevelt Wolford, 23, back to Arkansas on the charge that he was a fugitive from justice and was guilty of having fired two shots at one Frank Boyd, white, of Forest City, on or about September 20th of this year. Boyd was the only complaining witness and Attorney Huff was able to tear down his testimony and impress the U. S. Commissioner that it was a case of Boyd making a false charge against young Wolford in an effort to get him sent back to Arkansas to be a victim of the form of slavery that has been in vogue there since the 13th Amendment was adopted. 11-17-44

Following his victory, Attorney Huff told a reporter of the CHICAGO WORLD that although Wolford was without funds, he didn't dare ask for help from the Chicago branch of the NAACP, for the reason that the branch is under the domination of persons who refused to give aid in another case where Huff was the attorney and had given as a reason the fact that Huff was representing the accused man.

Attorney Huff accused the Chicago NAACP of being dominated by a bunch of "snobs."

THE DEEP SOUTH

Times—New York, N.Y.

Peonage of Paroled Convicts Meets Louisiana Curb

12-24-44

By JAMES E. CROWN

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 23—The peonage system as applied to paroled convicts in Louisiana is on the way out. The recalling of three prisoners from a big dairy farm in up-State Louisiana, where they were found to be working ten to fourteen hours a day for 75 cents and to be otherwise mistreated, has crystallized sentiment to such an extent that the entire parole system may be revised.

It is declared that 189 parolees are working on plantations for an average pay of about 25 cents an hour, regardless of prevailing wages. These men, nearly all Negroes, are docked on the slightest pretext and the 25 cents an hour usually amounts to about 15 cents an hour.

Under Louisiana's present parole system a prisoner cannot leave a job unless he can show the parole board that he is badly treated or can get a better job. The State is now busily engaged in investigating each case where prisoners have been assigned to work for favored employers. 12-24-44

News Notes: The old French quarter of New Orleans, known as the Vieux Carre, is in for a general overhauling. Many of the historic houses must be made to conform to modern safety regulations. The population of New Orleans has demanded almost en masse that fire traps be eliminated. This follows the death of five persons in one blaze and of four others in other fires. . . . The mothers of Louisiana settled the proposed "kissing strike" at the State University. Because a young woman was suspended when she defended kissing "dates" good night on the campus, and saw no harm in promiscuous kissing to a certain extent, a big part of the student body threatened to walk out unless she was reinstated. Then the parents from all over this State and other States wheeled into action and a great majority of them declared that rebellious students should be spanked. This strengthened the stand of the university authorities and now promiscuous kissing is out for good on the university campus and there will be no strike.

Slavery Still Exists in Mississippi

Evil System Denounced by Chicago Judge

The story that a young Negro, his wife and two children, were held in a state of virtual slavery on a Mississippi plantation until they fled was unfolded recently before Federal Judge Walter J. La Buy in Chicago.

The testimony came in the habeas corpus hearing in behalf of the Negro, Lonnie Kimbrough, 32, who sought to escape extradition to Sunflower county, Miss., which had been granted by Gov. Green.

Plantation Owner Assailed

Kimbrough, after telling his story, which was uncontradicted, was freed by Judge La Buy, who added:

"Some of these plantation owners apparently don don't know that slavery has been ended in the United States."

Under questioning by his attorney, William Henry Huff, the defendant said that in 1942 he had been working for the U. S. engineering service in Mississippi running a bull-dozer on airfields in that vicinity.

"Trumped-Up Quarrel"

On Dec. 1, 1942, he said he was set upon by one Willie Stewart, a Negro, and Stewart's two sons who "trumped up" a quarrel with him and slashed him with knives. All the participants in the brawl were arrested and jailed.

Then Kimbrough said, one W. F. Scruggs, owner of a plantation, visited him in jail and promised to arrange his freedom if Kimbrough would come to work on his plantation. Kimbrough said he accepted the offer and after a year received $42 in wages.

Beatings Told

Asked by Judge La Buy why he stayed at the plantation, when he had been making $270 a month before, Kimbrough said that he knew of three Negroes who had asked Scruggs for permission to leave his employment. All three were beaten with ax handles or wrench handles and severely injured, Kimbrouvh said.

So, said Kimbrough, he decided not ask to leave.

On Aug. 28 last, the testimony continued, Kimbrough, his wife and the children fled from the plantation and came to Chicago, where Kimbrough obtained a job in a war plant.

Writ Frees Prisoner

Then came the request for extradition, based on an indictment charging Kimbrough with assault with a deadly weapon on one Willie Stewart on March1, 1943 or three months after the altercation took place, according to Kimbrough's story.

Kimbrough said he had been told by Scruggs that his case had been disposed of, and that further he had seen Stewart since the incident and the two had shaken hands. However, the governor agreed to the extradition. Atty. Huff then sought a writ of habeas corpus in federal court on the grounds that Kimbrough was being deprived of his constitutional rights.

Judge La Buy agreed and Kimbrough is now a free man.

The Call--Kansas City, Mo. 12-29-44

Right And Proper

Daily World-Atlanta, Ga. 3-2-44

Announcement Monday by Attorney General Francis Biddle of a 14-count federal indictment returned against Albert Sydney Johnson, Arkansas planter, charging him with intimidating and holding Negro and white farm laborers in peonage, is another link in the long chain of such indictments under the Biddle administration.

The Little Rock Grand Jury charged that Johnson so intimidated the workers on his 2,000-acre plantation that they slipped away at night, leaving all their possessions and standing crops behind them. It alleges that Johnson bound white and Negro sharecroppers to his plantation by confiscating their ration books and forcing them to purchase food through his commisary only, and that he also refused to accept money from workers to pay off the debts that they owed him. 3-2-44

The Arkansas case presents a somewhat new angle in the prosecution of Peonage statutes, inasmuch as it involved white sharecroppers too, whereas most other cases in the past involved helpless and hapless Negroes. More and more, it is going to be necessary for just such stern action as was taken by the Grand Jury in Little Rock to force upon the dull consciousness of these planters the grave injustice in undertaking to grow rich and prosperous on the toil and sweat of poor white and Negro people and in reducing them to virtual slaves by threats, intimidation and even at the point of the gun.

Whether convictions will be brought against Johnson will have to be determined by a trial jury. But no matter what the outcome may be, it is bound to deter him from further evil practice of this sort and will also have a salutary effect upon others so inclined.

14 Peonage Counts Laid To Ark. Farmer

Daily World-Atlanta, Ga.

2-29-44

WASHINGTON—(S N S)—Attorney General Francis Biddle announced Monday that a Federal Grond Jury sitting at Little Rock, Arkansas, returned a 14-count indictment against Albert Sydney Johnson, of Cross County, Arkansas, charging him with violation of the Federal statute prohibiting peonage.

The 14 vitcims included both white and Negro sharecroppers and laborers, and the indictment charges that Johnson so intimidated the workers on his 2,000-acre plantation that they slipped away at night, leaving all their possessions and standing crops behind them.

The indictment further charges that Johnson bound workers to his plantation by confiscating their ration books and forcing them to purchase food throught his commissary only, and that he also refused to accept money from workers to pay off the debts that owed to him, thus making it illegal under the Arkansas statute for any other person to employ them.

Neighboring land-owners and officials, as well as the victims, complained of Johnson's practices, and the case was reported to the Department of Justice by a local official. Violation of the so-called Peonage Statute, Section 444, Title 18, U. S. Code, carries a maximum penalty of a $5,000 fine and 5 years imprisonment, which means that if convicted on all counts Johnson would face a maximum penalty of 70 years imprisonment and a $70,000 fine. 2-29-44

Investigation of the case was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. It was presented to the Grand Jury by U. S. Attorney Samuel Rorex, Assistant U. S. Attorney William H. Gregory, and Turner L. Smith of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, and was under the supervision of Assistant Attorney General Tom C. Clark.

Florida Court Reversed In Peonage Case

Journal & Guide Norfolk, Va.

Highest Tribunal Interprets Federal Statute Of 1867

1-15-44

WASHINGTON, D. C.—By an 8-to-1 decision, the United States Supreme Court on Monday Jan. 3 reversed the judgment of the United States Court for the northern district of Florida dismissing an indictment against Charles A. Gaskins, white, for arresting a colored man named Johnson to return him to a state of peonage.

Justice Owen J. Roberts delivered the opinion. Justice Frank Murphy dissented.

The majority opinion held that the District Court erred in holding that the post-Civil War statute abolishing and prohibiting peonage imposes no penalty for an arrest to compel the performance of labor or service unless the person arrested actually performed labor.

Gaskins was accused in the indictment of arresting Johnson, upon a claim that Johnson was indebted to him, and with intent to cause Johnson to perform labor in satisfaction of the debt.

FURTHER ALLEGATIONS

The indictment further alleged that Gaskins forcibly arrested Johnson against his will and transported him from one place to another in Florida. There was no allegation that Johnson rendered any labor or service in consequence of his arrest.

Section 1 of the Act of March 2, 1867, Justice Roberts said, "makes arrest of a person with intent to place him in a state of peonage a separate and independent offense. It penalizes 'whoever holds, arrests, returns, or causes to be held, arrested, or returned . . . any person to a condition of peonage.' The language is inartistic. The appropriate qualifying proposition for the word 'holds' is 'in.' An accurate qualifying phrase for the verb 'arrests' would be 'to place in or return to' peonage.

INTENT OF ACT 1-15-44

"But the compactness of phrasing and the lack of strict grammatical construction does not obscure the intent of the Act. Years ago this Court indicated that the disjunctive phrasing imports that each of the acts,—holding, arresting, or returning,—may be the subject of indictment and punishment. We think that view is sound apart from any consideration of the legislative history of the enactment. But when viewed in its setting no doubt of the purpose of the statute remains.

PROHIBITS PEONAGE

"The Act of 1867 was passed as the result of agitation in Congress for further legislation because of the use of federal troops to arrest persons who had escaped from a condition of peonage. The first section abolished and prohibited peonage and made certain practices in connection therewith criminal. The second section imposed a duty on all in the military and civil service to aid in the enforcement of the first, and provided that if any officer or other person in the miliarty service should offend against the Act's provisions he should, upon conviction by a court martial, be honorably dismissed from the service.

"It is plain that arrest for the purpose of placing a person in or returning him to a condition of peonage was one of the evils to be suppressed."

In dissenting, Justice Murphy said he doubted whether an arrest not followed by actual peonage "clearly and unmistakably falls" within the prohibition of section 1 of the Act.

"An in order to reach the opposite conclusion," he said, "this Court labels the statutory language 'inartistic' and as lacking in 'strict grammatical construction.' It then proceeds to rewrite the statute, in conformity with what it conceives to have been the original intention of Congress, so as to penalize 'whoever . . . arrests . . . any person for the purpose of placing him in a condition of peonage.' I cannot assent to this judicial revision of a criminal law. Congress alone has power to amend or clarify the criminal sanctions of a statute."

Ark Planter Owner Is Jailed To Federal Jail After Pleading Guilty In Peonage Trial

3-25-44

Sentenced

Pleads

Wealthy Ark. Planter Indicted For Enslaving Fourteen

3-25-44

HELENA, Ark. — Albert Sidney Johnson, 50, wealthy Cross County planter, who sat silently in court while Negro and white employes told of being beaten and threatened with death, pleaded guilty to two of the counts, and one-half years Judge Lemley said the other seven charges would not be pressed. 3-25-44

Harry J. Lemley refused a motion to dismiss the nine counts against Johnson, who sat silently in court while Negro and white employes told of being beaten and threatened with death. pleaded guilty to two of the counts, and one-half years Judge Lemley said the other seven charges would not be pressed. 3-25-44

Despite his plea that he be al-

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE RESEARCH REEL 86

lowed time to get his business in order, Johnson was immediately imprisoned.

The government charged that Johnson was keeping 11 persons in slavery on his Mississippi bottomlands by taking their ration coupons, and juggling their accounts.

Chief witness against Johnson was Mrs. Desha Moon, 45, who toiled in the fields like a man and who testified she began living with the plantation owner shortly after she divorced her husband in 1937. Johnson is married and the father of eight children living with their mother at Wynne, Ark.

Mrs. Moon, mother of three girls, said Johnson threatened her with violent death if she refused to live with him. She said he kept her in a "state of fear" until last August when he let her go because of her health.

"He would curse me and my children and call us all kinds of foul names whenever we asked for money," Mrs. Moon said. On one occasion, the woman said, Johnson drew a pistol and threatened to kill her.

Slave Planter Gets 2½ Years

Courier — Pittsburgh, Pa. 3-25-44

Bulletin!

WASHINGTON — Victor Rotnem, director of the Civil Rights unit of the Department of Justice, this week hailed the conviction of Albert Sydney Johnson, wealthy white cotton planter, of peonage, by a Federal court sitting at Helena, Ark., last Saturday. "This is the seventh conviction won by the Civil Rights unit of the Department of Justice in four months," said Rotnem.

HELENA, Ark.—Fifty-year-old Albert Sydney Johnson, wealthy white plantation owner of Cross county, began serving a two and one-half year sentence in Federal prison this week, after pleading guilty, Saturday, to charges of enslaving two of his Negro employees.

Johnson had entered a plea of The planter pleaded guilty to the two counts involving Clyde Miller and Shelly McKinney, both of whom testified Johnson had held them as slaves.

Atlanta Daily World Atlanta, Ga.

William Henry Huff

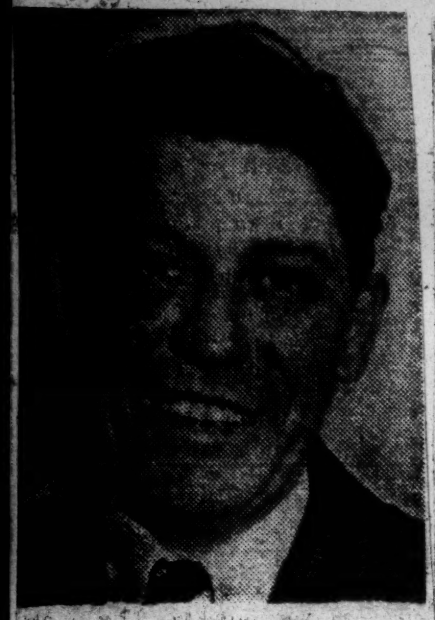
When historians write the story of the death of peonage in the South, they will be forced to honor the work and memory of William Henry Huff, noted Chicago lawyer, whose greatest service to the race consists in the unrelenting fight he has and still is making against this ruthless form of economic servitude in southern communities. 12-16-44

Beginning his activities back in 1941, with the Cunningham-McWhorter peonage case at Oglethorpe County, Georgia, Atty. Huff, through the Department of Justice, directed an investigation into the alleged practices, which showed these men had repeatedly charged Negro field hands with escaping from their farms with past misdemeanors, had them arrested and re-employed after their arrest and assignments to chain gangs.

In Chicago, Attorney Huff organized the Committee to Abolish Peonage. After several months of effort the Committee was successful in having a grand jury indict Cunningham and McWhorter on charges of peonage.

This action opened the way and established a pattern by which the U. S. Department has set about cleaning up Peonage in the South. 12-16-44

Again this week in Chicago, Attorney Huff's work came to the fore when, on behalf of Lonnie Kimbrough from a Mississippi peonage farm, he fought extradition of the fugitive on the grounds that the Negro was the victim of a system of conspiracy, leading the judge to observe that "some of these plantation owners apparently don't know that slavery has ended in the United States." Some day Huff will get his rightful recognition for these pioneering efforts he is now making.



H. L. Mitchell

Sharecropper Union Grows

PM-New York, N.Y.
4-16-44

By Earl Conrad

A tall, sandy-haired Southerner, quiet in dress and manner, sat in a velvet-backed chair of the Hotel Commodore—hardly the type you would expect to find in one of the most hard-boiled labor organizing jobs in the country.

His name is H. L. Mitchell and he is president of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. That means he leads sharecroppers, the half slaves of the South.

"What's the 'H' stand for? What's your first name?"

He frowned.

"Nobody calls me anything but 'H.L.' Please leave it that way."

How about the sharecroppers?

20,000 Organized

"Plenty," he said. "There are 20,000 that are organized into the union now. The war hasn't stopped the agricultural workers from finding their way."

A question about Negroes in the union started him in earnest.

"Yes, the membership is 60 per cent Negro. Relations between the two groups are mighty harmonious, all things considered. They sit together in the same meeting halls, call one another by the familiar union term, "Brother," and have learned that they have plenty in common. Whites and Negroes both know that the plantation owners and the Southern State apparatus are equally and identically their enemies."

"How can you make your impact felt when your membership is disfranchised and can't go to the polls?" 4-16-44

"Well, we can write letters, send telegrams and resolutions. We can take a stand on legislation that way and compel State and Federal bodies to take note of our views, and they do."

Help From North

He has been in town the last few days to help raise funds as part of the fifth annual National Sharecroppers Week.

He spoke appreciatively of Northern liberal help.

"And that help is great for the sharecropper's morale," he said. "He knows that someone—someone he's never seen, is interested in him fighting for him. Yes, the forces of progress North and South are really united."

Union Charge Of Prisoner Labor Probed

PM-New York, N.Y.
5-19-44

WMC Sifts Claim of Using Captives in Cotton Fields

By Gardner Jackson
PM's Bureau

PM Exclusive

WASHINGTON, May 19.—War prisoners, many of them German, will soon be brought to the Mississippi delta for work in the cotton fields where plenty of American workers are available, according to charges now under investigation by the WMC (War Manpower Commission).

The charges, filed with WMC Chairman Paul V. McNutt by H. L. Mitchell, executive secretary of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, assert that the big cotton growers have prevailed upon the War Dept. to establish war prisoner camps so as to keep wages of cotton field workers down to $1.50 or $2 a day.

Mitchell charges that plans are well along for the establishment of four new camps in Crittenden County, Ark., one of the richest cotton counties in the country. There are 3,000 unemployed Negro and white workers in nearby Memphis, according to Mitchell, waiting for cotton chopping and picking jobs to open up in the adjoining delta counties. 5-19-44

Control Shifted

Control over farm labor was shifted from the WMC last year by Congress and placed in the hands jointly of the Office of Labor in the WFA (War Food Administration) and the Agricultural Extension Services. As the system works out the county agent, an Extension Services employee, certifies the need in his county to the State Extension Service Director who, in the case of war prisoners, certifies the requirement to the Army camp commander.

Under the Geneva Convention governing treatment of prisoners they are paid 80 cents a day which is kept for them till their release.

H. L. Mitchell

The employers are supposed to turn over to the U. S. Treasury an additional amount to equal the difference between that 80 cents and the prevailing wages in the area.

But the use of any considerable number of prisoners, it is contended, inevitably operates to keep the prevailing wages below the level it would otherwise reach. Prevailing wage determinations are made by the County Agricultural War Board which is dominated by the big growers and their county agent.

Other Complaints

The STFU charges supplement complaints that the Poll bill which gives county agents control of farm workers across state lines through use of Federal funds has led to extensive hoarding of farm labor, particularly in the south. 5-19-44

But so powerful in Congress is the southern cotton bloc that all plans to expose and remedy the situation have been blocked before they could get started. A sign of this is the backing and filling on the question of farm deferments. Most of the pressure against stiffening the standards for these deferments has come from the South. The big growers, through their Cotton Council, are determined to keep available a large supply of cheap labor. The use of war prisoners contributes to that aim.

Southern Tenant Farmers Union Charges Congress Upholds Peonage; Seeks Hearing

Age—New York, N.Y.
1-15-44

MEMPHIS, Tenn.—H. L. Mitchell, President of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, charging that the 1944 farm labor supply bill passed by the House and now before the Senate Appropriations Committee forces farm workers into a new form of peonage, has asked for permission to testify before the Senate Committee.

The sharecropper leader declared: "This measure is practically the same as Public Law 45 adopted in 1943 and containing the notorious Pace Amendment which prohibits the use of public funds for recruiting or transporting American farm workers out of a county unless each individual workers is given the written permission of the agricultural extension agent in the county in which he lives. The 1943 law effectively froze all unemployed and under-employed farm workers on cotton plantations of the south in a new form of peonage. The importation of foreign labor was permitted which would have been unnecessary had American farm workers been given the opportunity to migrate to labor shortage areas."

The bill, approved December 17th by the 17th by the House of Representatives, was sponsored by the American Farm Bureau, which Mitchell declared, "is an organization of commercial farm operators and cotton planters. The Farm Bureau openly controls nearly all state and county agricultural extension services. The Extension Service is thus dominated by these big farmers who wish to maintain an abundant labor supply in the southern states regardless of the fact workers are employed only four to six months each year at below subsistence wage levels." 1-15-44

The Southern Tenant Farmers Union is an organization of Negro and white share-croppers, tenant farmers and agricultural workers, with headquarters at 166 Monroe avenue, Memphis, Tenn.

Tenant Farmers Teac... Lesson In Racial Harm...

Tillers Of All Races Meet In Arkansas For Complete Equality

(quested land for homesteading, de- manded abolition of war prisoner labor, vetoed the importation of foreign labor to the south and urged an investigation of civil rights violation against seasonal farm workers by the ex- tension service and the farm bu- reau.

LITTLE ROCK, (ANP) — A dramatic lesson in racial harmony was given local whites during the four-day 11th annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers union here and they are still dazed by the miracle of leasning that 150 white and Negro delegates from 11 states called each other "brother" and "sister" and even referred to one Negro delegate as "mister."

Miracles number one, two and three respectively were H. L. Mitchell, Memphis white man and president of the union, F. R. Bet- son, a Negro, vice-president, and Miss Rose Pesetta, a dark-haired Russian-born beauty, who has be- come an aggressive labor leader.

SUPPORT FEPC

Resolutions adopted by the body, in a r... ing session, declared H. L. Mitch- ell, in a flat denial of labor short- ages, that the country, Mitchell revealed. The farm workers for transfer to other areas while a labor shortage was said to exist.

PLAN CONTRACTS

An arrangement with other un- ions and employers enabling STFU officials to obtain jobs between five months for the cotton pick- ers members needs throughout the south. He said the ex-convention voted to supply share- croppers with written contracts so

they might have legal recourse if plantation owners and employers failed to abide by contract conditions.

The convention backed the establishment of a permanent FEPC by congress to "continue necessary preventive measures insuring the American worker against discrimination in his employment because of race, color or creed." The "eradication of discrimination has proven to be possible only through establishment of appropriate legislation or regulation by the federal government," the resolution added.

White and colored delegates joined in singing rousing union songs under the leadership of Miss Rose Pesetta, New York labor leader. Placards, symbolizing the soul of the convention, decorated the walls of the church room where the delegates met, read "Christ came to Earth to Make All Men Equal" and "A Laborer Is Worth His Hire."

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.
11-25-44

A Union Of Farm Workers

Last week when the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union met in convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, President H. L. Mitchell recommended the establishment of a national farm labor union with concentration on the organizing of tractor drivers and farm machine operators.

The idea is an excellent one.

Post-war unemployment will cause millions of workers to return to the country from the cities, and the problem of rural joblessness will loom as great as that of urban employment.

The resulting competition for rural farm jobs will bring about conflict and drastic lowering of the standard rural living unless the farm workers are unionized.

The whole problem is of the greatest interest to Negroes because they will comprise the great majority of farm workers in the rural South.

Moreover, the Southern Farmers' Union is admirably suited to assume the task of organizing these workers, because it has demonstrated its freedom from color bias.

Also, unionization of white and colored rural workers will offset the post-war propaganda of the Ku Klux Klan and such subversive terroristic organizations.

The Federal Government will not do anything to halt the growth of the Ku Klux Klan in rural regions, because it is too dependent upon the political support of the politicians who thrive on racial conflict. But a strong union of farm workers will foster tolerance, fair play and equality.

11/25/44

SOUTHERNERS DENY FARM LABOR LACK
The People's Voice--12-2-44
N.Y.N.Y.

Little Rock, Ark(ANP)- A dramatic lesson in racial harmony was given local whites during the four day 11th annual convention of the Southern Tenant Farmers union here and they are still dazed by the miracle of learning that 150 white and Negro delegates from 11states called each other "brother" and"sister" and even referred to one Negro delegate as " mister". 12-2-44

The leaders were H.L. Mitchell, a Memphis white man and president of the union, F.R. Botten, a Negro, vice-president and Rose Resetta, who has been active in Northern labor circles.

Resolution adopted by the body supported a permanent FEPC, requested land for homesteading, demanded abolition of war prisoner labor, vetoed the importation of foreign labor to the south and urged an investigation of civil rights violation against seasonal itinerant farm workers by the extension service and the farm bureau.

A minimum of 50,000 workers will be available on plantations of eastern Ark. Missouri and Mississippi for three to five months following close of the cotton picking season, declared H.L. Mitchell, in a flat denial of labor shortage in the south. He said the executive council had recruited 1,100 farm workers for transfer to other areas while a labor shortage was said to exist.

Jamaican Farm Workers Send $1,500,000 Home

Daily World - Kansas City, Mo. 1-28-44

Accodring to the Jamaican Gleaner, a Kingston newspaper, Jamaican workers in the United States (engaged largely in farm work) sent home between June and November a total of 394,404 pounds, or more than a million and a half dollars.

In addition to funds which the Jamaicans themselves have sent home to their families and to the banks for savings, nearly $600,000 in deductions has been sent to the Government Savings Bank in Jamaica by the U. S. Government in keeping with an agreement to be credited to the war workers' savings accounts, or to be passed on to their dependents. To help the Jamaican workers save a part of their wages, one dollar per working day is deducted from their pay and sent back to the island.

About 2,000 of the 9,000 Jamaican workers recruited by the War Food Administration last spring are still in the country doing agricultural work. It is estimated that 1,700 are cutting sugar cane in Florida, and about 300 are working in Connecticut and New Jersey. The other 7,000 have returned to Jamaica.

Cotton Pickers' Wages Dropping

Daily World - Atlanta, Ga. 7-23-44

WASHINGTON, D. C. — (C) — According to a letter of Brig. Gen. L. F. Guierre to Paul M. McNutt Chairman of the War Manpower Commission, the use of 4000 prisoners of war has caused cotton pickers wages to drop. Cotton pickers in Missouri and Arkansas have been receiving $3.50 to $4.50 a day, but since the prisoners have been used, they are receiving only $1.50 for the same day's work.